



JOSEPH A. CURTATONE
MAYOR

CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE



MINUTES

OCTOBER 23, 2019

The Community Preservation Committee (CPC) held a regular meeting at 6:30pm in the third floor community room at the Visiting Nurse Association, 259 Lowell Street, Somerville, MA 02144. An audio recording of the meeting is available upon request.

Members Present Chair Michael Fager, Vice Chair Uma Murugan, Dick Bauer, Jane Carbone, Luisa Oliveira, Amelia Aboff, Tatiana Shannon, Eleanor Rances, Laura Beretsky

MEMBERS
Michael Fager, Chair
Uma Murugan, Vice Chair
Dick Bauer
Laura Beretsky
Jane Carbone
Eleanor Rances
Luisa Oliveira
Tatiana Shannon
Amelia Aboff

STAFF
Judith Tumusiime

Staff Present Heidi Burbidge, Kiely Barnard - Webster

The chair Mr. Michael Fager opened the meeting at approximately 6:30p.m with an introduction of the CPC members.

Agenda item 1: Introduction to CPA and the CPC

Ms. Tumusiime gave a presentation describing the Community Preservation Act and the FY20 application process.

Agenda item 2: Presentations of FY20 CPA applications:

Central Hill Campus Phase I: Renovation of Central Hill including the Central Hill Playground, Memorial Walk East, and Gold Star Plaza

Ms. Courtney Kirk presented the application which would fund Renovation of Central Hill including three areas - the Central Hill Playground, Memorial Walk East, and Gold Star Plaza. Mr. Fager asked about the fate of the Spanish American Memory. Ms. Kirk responded that the Spanish American Memory would be put in storage for the future phase of the Western half of central hill and would seat in the middle of the City Hall Campus. Mr. Fager asked about additional trees at the library and Ms. Kirk responded that the project included planting 73 trees on the Central Hill campus which would comprise mostly native species and preservation of most of the trees. Ms. Beretsky asked about the age groups for the playground and Ms. Kirk responded that the play ground was divided between different ages (2-5 years and 5-12 years). She said that the upper space was for 5-12 year olds and the lower side for 2-5 year olds and a hang out area for the teenagers and young adults. She added that the front area would have equipment to accommodate ages from 2-75 year olds and some spaces would be in closed fenced area

and others in open areas to accommodate all the ages using the library and hanging out. Mr. Fager asked about the parking space at the library and Ms. Kirk responded that the parking space quantity was determined by the high school project and zoning board which considered the whole campus. She said for phase one all parking behind the library was staying the same and that the high school campus had are twelve spaces that would be accessible including drop off at the library. Ms. Murugan asked about the slots assigned for the library and Ms. Kirk responded that the current slots were for staff but that there were discussions to have the slots open to the public.

Mr. Fager asked about future plans for requesting additional CPA funding and Ms. Kirk responded that there were possibilities for future plans but that the design and construction of the 1885 phase of City Hall campus was not yet scheduled. Mr. Fager asked about the rest of the City Hall campus and Ms. Kirk responded that it had not been quite determined. She said that after the schedules for design and construction of 1885 and City Hall are worked out, the open space between the two buildings would be part of the design process. Ms. Kirk said that phase could require CPA funding but that she was not very sure. Ms. Carbone asked why there was a difference between the request in the application and the request included in the presentation and Ms. Kirk clarified that there was a typo in the application but that the funding request was \$300,000.

City of Somerville Stabilization Fund: To seed the Open Space Acquisition Fund

Ms. Oliveira presented a funding request to acquire more public open spaces. She said that the fund was set up to make money available to support the City goal of acquiring 125 acres of open space in the next 20 years. Mr. Fager asked if the city council created the fund and Ms. Oliveira responded that the council had voted on it. Mr. Fager asked if any money had been allocated to fund and Ms. Oliveira responded that FY20 application would be the first funds towards the reserve. Mr. Fager asked if there was any plan for other funds besides the CPA funds and Ms. Oliveira responded that she was not aware of any other plans. Ms. Beretsky asked if the parcels of land had already been identified and Ms. Oliveira responded that no parcels had been identified but that the requested funds would be the first step in the process of making it easier for the city to acquire the parcels. She informed the committee that the current acquisition price is 2 million dollars per acre and that the city would not be buying large parcels soon but that smaller ones could be purchased.

Visiting Nurse Community: Rehabilitate and repurpose the VNA Garden into a Community Healing Garden

Ms. Linda Cornell presented a funding request to transform the existing garden into a community healing garden for all. The proposal included creation of a safe and accessible pathway, replacement of the fence and lining the walkway with pollinator and herbal plants. Ms. Beretsky asked about the long term plans for maintaining the garden and if there were plans for contracting it out. Ms. Cornell responded that the VNA maintains the current garden and that the plan was to continue maintaining the healing garden with support from volunteers although the VNA had brought in landscapers from time to time to do a big cleanup. She said that the VNA had garden days once or twice a year where they got residents involved. Ms. Murugan asked about the ownership of the building and Ms. Cornell responded that the land was owned by Visiting Nurse Community Inc. a nonprofit, which was an affiliate

of the VNA. Ms. Murugan further asked how long the VNA would continue to operate and Ms. Cornell responded that the building was built in perpetuity and that nothing else could be built on the land.

Ms. Oliveira asked if the soils had been tested and Ms. Linda responded that the whole site was contaminated before the construction of the VNA. She said that it was cleaned to acceptable standards and that the VNA had received a certificate of fitness. Ms. Oliveira further asked about the type of public access and if there was a signage showing visiting hours that could not inconvenience the residents. Ms. Cornell responded that normally the public used it when they stumbled upon it especially the neighbors but that she would like to have a signage on it near the pathway. She said that there would be ground rules on the hours and that security would be paid for by the VNA. She also said that the path would be extended because they wanted the Somerville community to use the gardens and feel that sense of ownership.

Mr. Fager asked about accessibility and said that he had known about the site even before the VNA considered buying it but didn't know the garden existed. He was concerned that privately owned public open spaces especially the ones Somerville residents pay for don't create a welcoming atmosphere like publically owned open spaces. He referred to the sign in the proposal which did not show public access. Ms. Cornell clarified that the design could only allow a certain number of letters and that it was only an illustration. She agreed with Mr. Fager's concerns and said that was what the VNA wanted to address. She said that the VNA wanted to make people feel welcome. Mr. Fager asked how the VNA was going to ensure that people understood that the path was not an extension of the bike path. Ms. Cornell said she was not sure and welcomed suggestions.

Mr. Bauer asked about the impact of the GLX extension and Ms. Cornell responded that the VNA planned on replacing the fence with a cedar fence and that hopefully that would protect the front. She raised concerns about the constant construction of the GLX. Ms. Murugan asked about maintenance supplies for the garden and the maintenance budget. Ms. Linda responded that they planned to put an irrigation system which could be supported by rain water. Ms. Murugan asked if the irrigation system was discussed with the architect and Ms. Cornell responded that it was built into the cost. Mr. Bauer appreciated the VNA for hosting the CPC meetings for all years the CPC has been meeting. Ms. Cornell was grateful for the compliment and said that the VNA hosted a number of community meetings. Ms. Oliveira asked if the proposed project would be willing to work with city on issues such as signage to ensure that it was considered a public space. Ms. Linda welcomed the idea and said that the VNA was considering setting up an advisory committee to discuss such issues and acknowledged that the VNA building would not have been built without the support of the City of Somerville.

Elizabeth Peabody House: Installation of addressable Fire Alarm System

Ms. Aucella presented a funding proposal for the installation of an addressable fire alarm system which would allow firefighters to see exactly where an alarm was being set off and reduce the potential damage to the building. Ms. Carbone asked if the system had a sprinkler. Ms. Aucella responded that the proposal was still under consideration but that the funding proposal was only for replacing the fire alarm

system. Mr. Bauer asked about the incorporation of the sprinklers and Ms. Aucella responded that she would need to double check but that the requested funds were to replace the old fire system.

Somerville Museum (Part 2): Additional funding for the construction of an elevator

Ms. Mangum presented a funding proposal for additional funding for the construction of an elevator to increase the overall accessibility of the Museum. She said that the cost of the elevator they received in 2016 was reasonable but that it had increased from 750,000 dollars to 1.2 million dollars over the years in part due to the law suit. She said that the increase was also due to changes in the scope of services which included the foundation work in the basement, design, renovation of the roof and the preservation restriction. Ms. Beretsky asked if the Museum followed up with other foundations such as Peabody which could support them. Ms. Mangum responded that they had followed up. She said that they had been trying to hire a part time development Director from the funds donated to the Museum who would help raise funds for operations and capital projects. Ms. Mangum said that she had also talked to the Massachusetts Culture Facility fund and they were open to the idea of her using the \$40,000 the facility gave the museum in 2015. She said the museum had already spent \$96,000 on the design phase and would apply in January for the reminding 25% of the project fund.

Ms. Aboff asked about the preservation restriction and Ms. Mangum responded that they had to go through the Massachusetts Historic Commission and that the preservation restriction was very strict. Ms. Oliveira asked if the museum was free, number of hours of operations, and the number visitors. Ms. Mangum responded that the museum was not free because they needed operation costs and that the museum didn't have any endowment except for \$50,000. She said that the museum depended mostly on volunteers and part time staff. She said the museum administered a five dollar fee for membership which admits members for free and that there was one free day per month opened to the public and was part of the preservation restriction. She said that the number of visits depended on the construction time and number of exhibitions and ranged between 1500 and 3000 visits per year. She said that the museum opened on Thursdays (2:00-7:00pm), Fridays (2:00-9:00pm), Saturdays (12:00-9:00pm), and that many activities took place there on Sundays and that this information was posted on their website.

Agenda item 3: Public Comment Period

Mr. Fager invited public comments from the people who had registered to speak.

Ms. Dyan Blowoff thanked the CPA for all the support it had given the museum and reiterated that museum supported a number of community actives and that the museum membership had gone up. She emphasized the need for access for all including the people with disabilities. She said that the museum could not apply for certain grants because it was not handicap accessible and that it could not hold certain events because it was not handicapped accessible.

Mr. Stephen Mackey a member of the board of the museum gave a background of his passion for the museum which went back to his high school days. He emphasized the need for the museum to be accessible to everyone including the volunteers and that with increased accessibility, it would be eligible for funds from the American Alliance of Museums and federal funding agencies for the museums. He

believed that over time there would be a return on the capital investment and that it would also increase support even outside Somerville. He requested the CPC to consider the funding proposal of the Somerville Museum.

Ms. Eileen Schofield the president of Historic Somerville said that they were housed in the Somerville Museum. She said that she was a volunteer in the museum and supported the request for funding proposal. She said that there were large artifacts at the basement of the museum which were locked away from the public and were not being taken care of as required. She said that volunteers try and do some work over the weekend but it was hard. She said that there was need to bring those objects upstairs because they were being affected by floods when it rained and that they were great pieces which needed to be accessed by the Somerville community.

Ms. Anna Warrock a 40 year resident of Somerville spoke in strong support of the museum proposal for her family, friends, elders and veterans to be part of the great museum. She emphasized the community aspect of the museum and said that she knew nothing about the Greek community until she attended an exhibition at the museum. She added that she didn't know about the union square businesses and the families behind them until that exhibition. She said that her most important part of the exhibition was when they asked Somerville residents to bring stuff to the museum which are important. The second important issue to her was accessibility and said that her sister was disabled and couldn't enjoy such events and a 90 year old friend who would have loved to visit the museum couldn't use the steps.

Ms. Kate Zebrose said that she was a full time volunteer helping with the website and that before she got disabled she would help with cleaning the objects in the basement. Ms. Zebrose said that she had a trajectory of increasing her disabled overtime and that it would be good if she had access to continue the work at the basement. Ms. Zebrose said that she could not take her wheel chair to the museum and that if she wanted to access it, she had to get her friends to get upstairs which was still difficulty for her to move the stairs and get around once she got there. She said that there had been plans for an elevator since the 1980s and that the more there are delays the more expensive it becomes to construct one.

Ms. Janet Wood-Spagwoli said that she supports the funding proposal for the museum. She said that it was very difficult if one had a disability or an extra physical need to access the toilets. She said such individuals find it hard to attend all the community events, exhibitions and even volunteer at the museum. She requested the CPC to help the community access that treasure (museum) so they can be able to learn about Somerville, interact with community members, and volunteer.

Mr. Jeff Myers said that he was a long term resident of Somerville and a volunteer at the museum. He said that he understood the frustration when the museum keeps asking for money because of the history that had already been presented. Mr. Myers emphasized the open studios which are opened at the museum every year but were not accessible to every member of the community. He requested the CPC consider the funding the proposal.

Mr. Lawrence Willwerth presented a written statement highlighting his life-long residence and business. He said that the proposed renovations, current improvements, and employment hires were key to the long-term preservation and restoration of their history and heritage. He said that he is a Trustee of the Somerville museum and that the trustees of the museum long ago recognized the need for those improvements and instituted a long term plan and program to repair and upgrade the museum to make it accessible for all and be able to properly maintain and preserve Somerville's history and its artifacts. He appreciated the previous CPA support. He provided the history of the museum and said that the 100 year old museum needed extensive renovation to make it compliant to the current codes and regulations and be accessible to all. He supported the request for funds which he said would ensure that the museum to be compliant and able to continue the historic activities of the community well into the future.

Mr. Charm Devereaux talked about some of the activities of the museum and said that she was community curator. She said that the museum invites the community to make exhibits at the museum. Ms. Devereaux said that she was going to curate an event which was going to happen next month about faith in the city exhibiting the various religions. She said there were going to be photographs from 20 communities in East Somerville and some of outside Somerville where Somerville residents go to worship. She emphasized that the museum mission is to mirror the community and that it reflected who the residents were and what they stood for and that it was a very important place in the community.

Mr. Fager asked the public present to share their priorities (High, moderate, and low) of the presentations and reminded them about the written public comments that were due November 1.

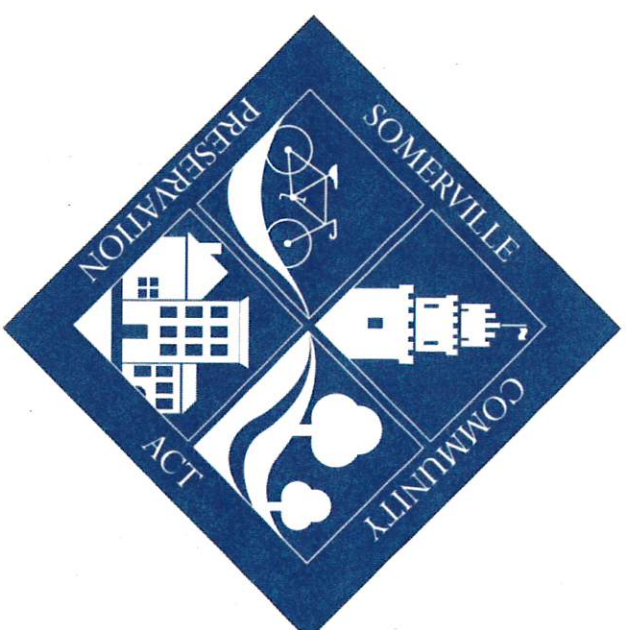
Meeting Adjournment

Upon a motion by Mr. Fager seconded by Ms. Murugan, the Community Preservation Committee voted 9-0 to adjourn the meeting at approximately 8:25.

Next meeting: Tuesday, November 19th at 6:30pm (Visiting Nurse Association).

Documents and Exhibits

1. Agenda
2. Presentation Community Preservation Act, the FY20 application process and funds available
3. Presentations of FY20 CPA applications:
 - a. Central Hill Campus Phase I: Renovation of Central Hill including the Central Hill Playground, Memorial Walk East, and Gold Star Plaza
 - b. City of Somerville Stabilization Fund: To seed the Open Space Acquisition Fund
 - c. Visiting Nurse Community: Rehabilitate and repurpose the VNA Garden into a Community Healing Garden
 - d. Elizabeth Peabody House: Installation of addressable Fire Alarm System
 - e. Somerville Museum (Part 2): Renovation of elevator to increase the overall accessibility of the Museum

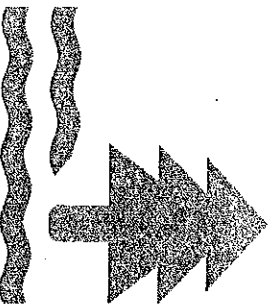


Community Preservation Committee Community Meeting

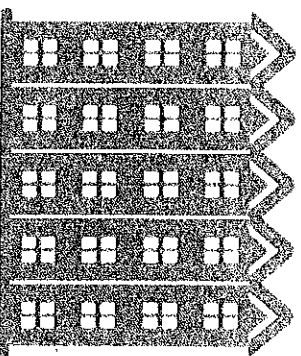
October 23, 2019
Visiting Nurse Association

The Community Preservation Act (CPA)

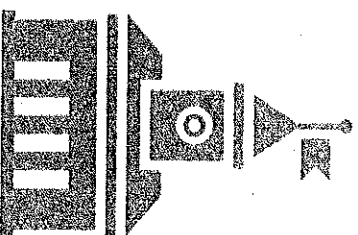
- ▶ Massachusetts legislation (MGL Ch. 44B)
- ▶ Local adoption (now at 173 communities!)
- ▶ Creates a new funding source from a property tax surcharge for communities to invest in...



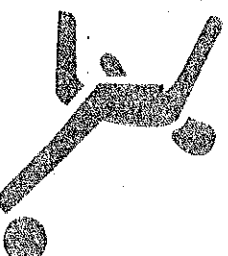
Open Space



Affordable
Housing



Historic
Preservation



Recreation

FY20 Funds Available

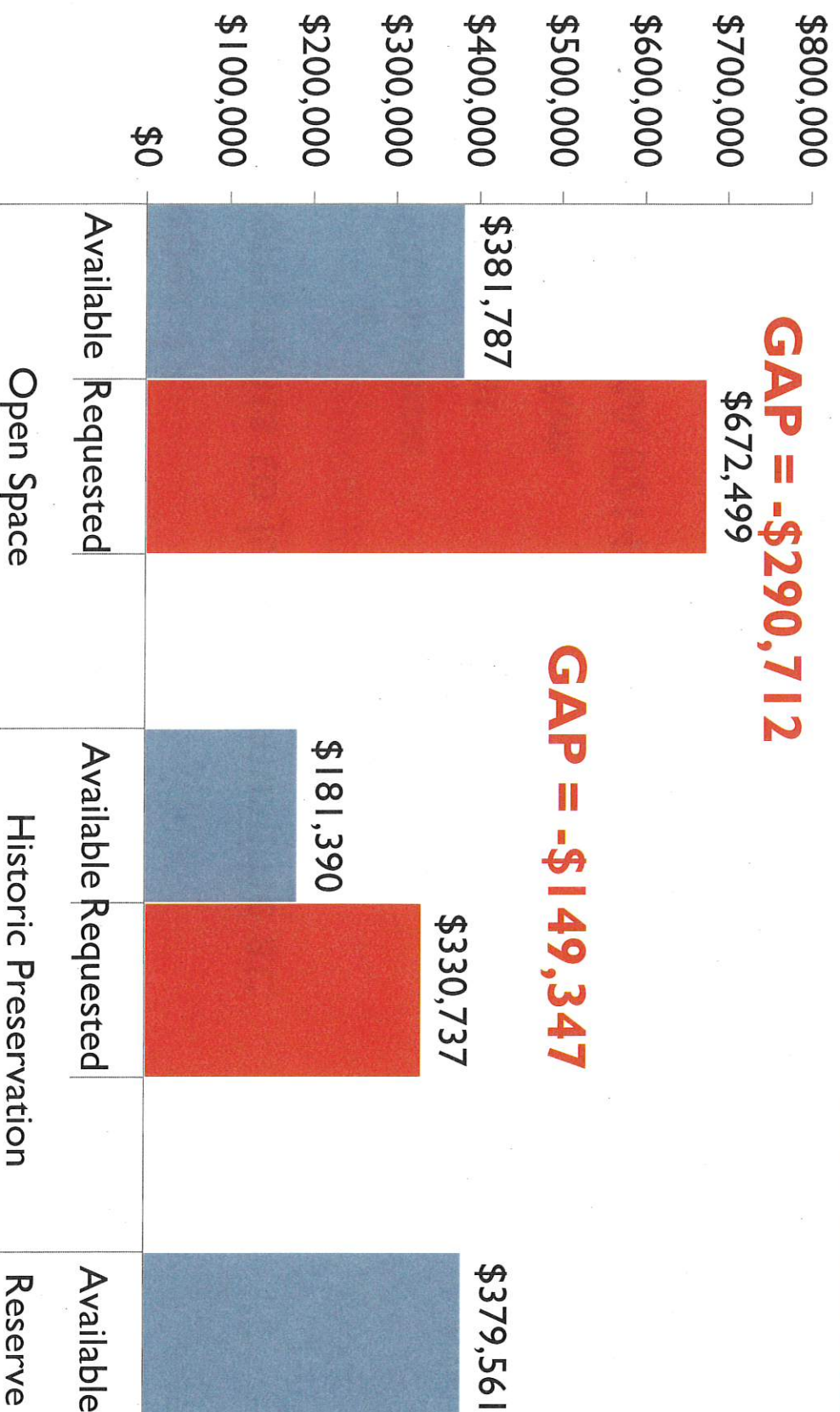
	FY20 Available	FY20 Projects Funded (Emergency)	Total Currently Available
Open Space and Recreation (20%)	\$442,787	\$61,000	\$381,787
Historic Resources (15%)	\$431,390	\$250,000	\$181,390
Community Housing* (45%)	\$1,160,394	\$312,153 (Debt)	\$848,241
Undesignated (10%)	\$490,561	\$111,000	\$379,561
Total	\$2,525,132	\$734,153	\$1,790,979

*Appropriated to Affordable Housing Trust. **FY20 CPA Affordable Housing Funding Applications are now available. The deadline is December 9, 2019. Please visit the City's AHTF website <https://www.somervillema.gov/departments/affordable-housing-trust-fund>**

CPA Fund Applications FY20

Project Owner	Project Description	Open space/Recreation	Historic Preservation
Visiting Nurse Association	Community Healing Garden	\$172,499	\$0
City of Somerville	Open Space Acquisition Fund	\$200,000	\$0
City of Somerville	Central Hill Campus Phase I	\$300,000	\$0
Elizabeth Peabody House	Addressable Fire Alarm System	\$0	\$38,000
Somerville Museum	Access for All (Part 2)	\$0	\$292,737
Total		\$672,499	\$330,737

Requests vs. funding available, cont'd



Share your priorities

After the presentations, each person will get five sticky notes:



High Priority



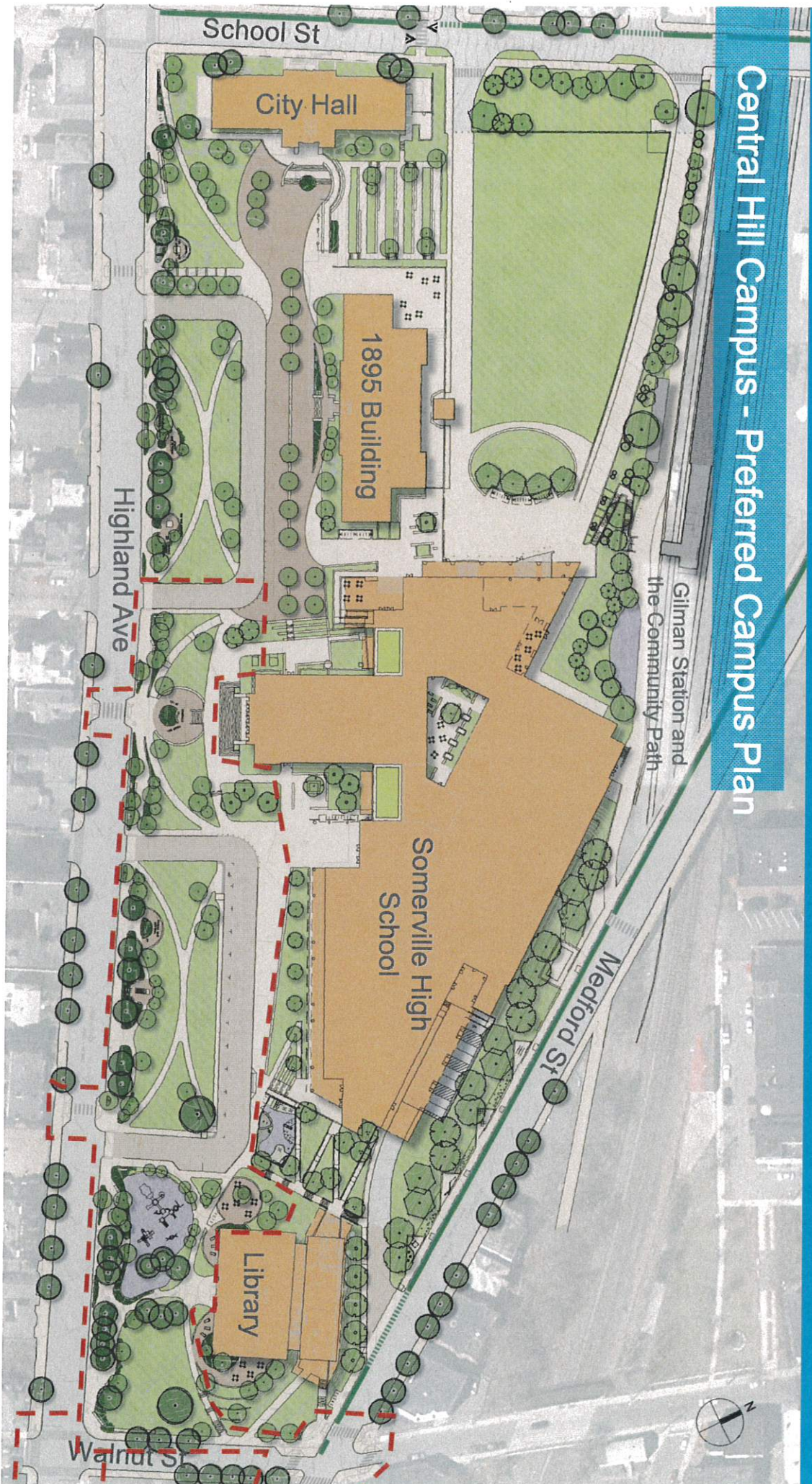
Moderate Priority



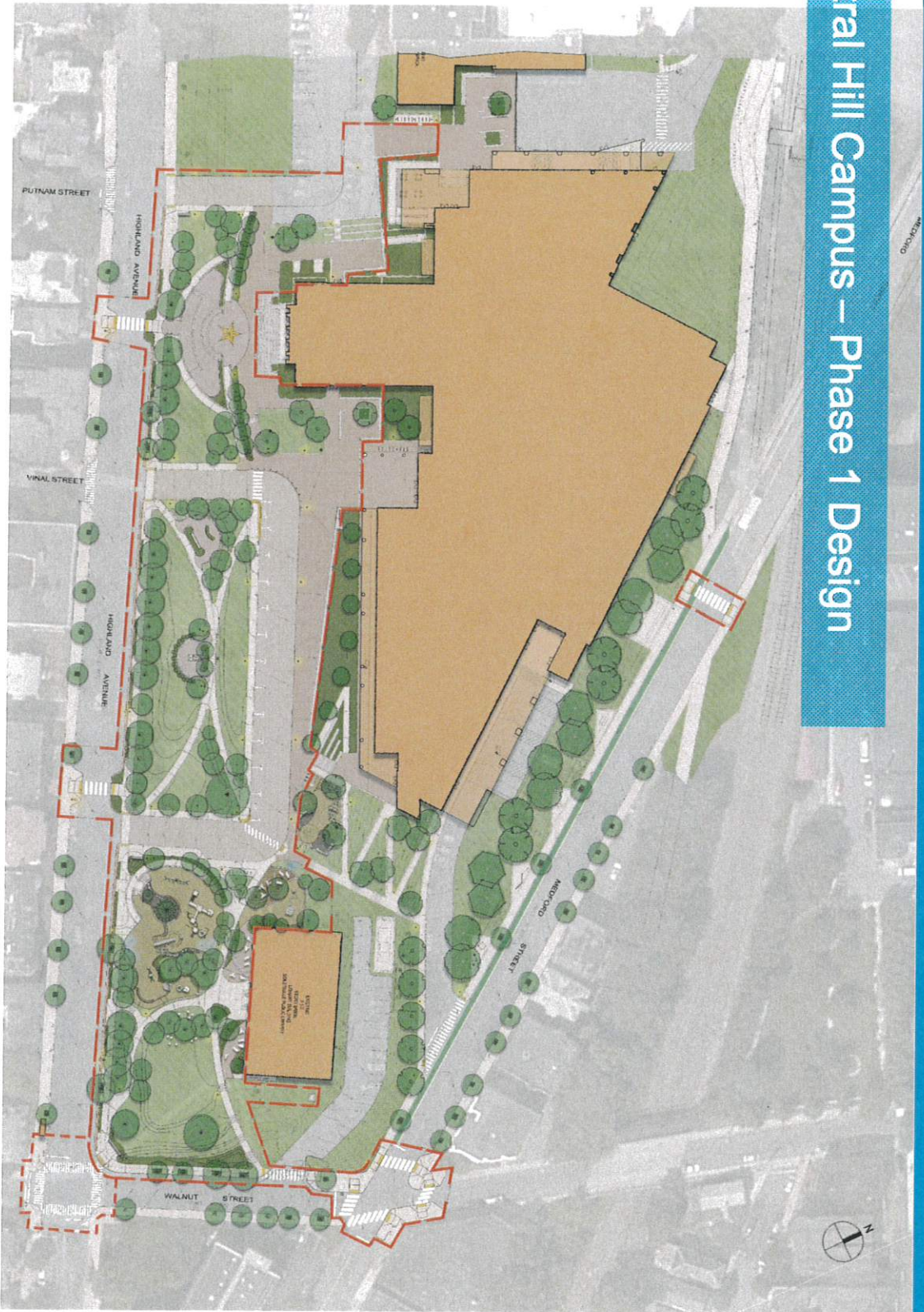
Lower Priority

Put a sticky note under each project presented tonight indicating the level of priority you put on the project. Feel free to write comments on the sticky notes.

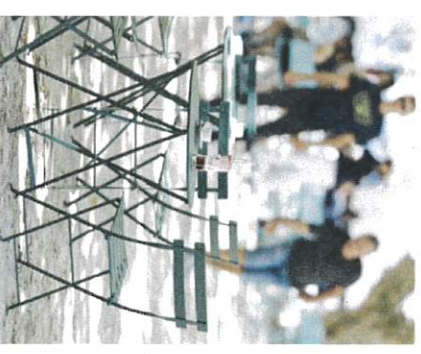
Central Hill Campus - Preferred Campus Plan



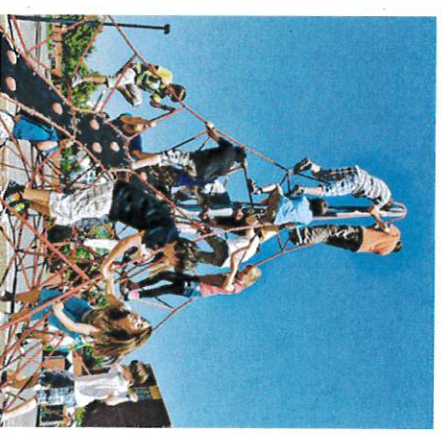
Central Hill Campus – Phase 1 Design



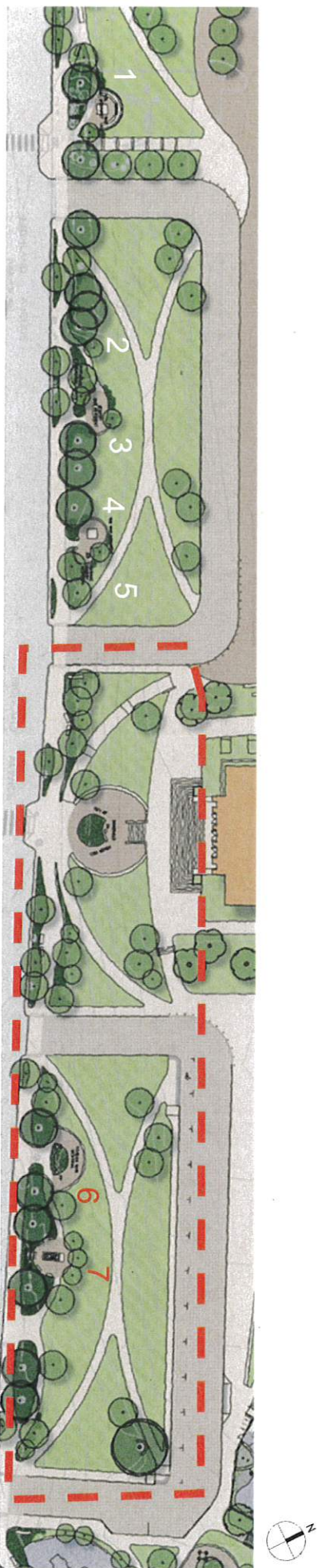
Library Green and Central Hill Playground



Library Green and Central Hill Playground



Central Hill Campus Plan – Memorial Walk



Centralized / chronological placement of memorials

Phase 3 and 4 Central Hill – Memorial Walk West



1. Civil War Memorial



1. Memorial Cannons



3. Spanish War / Philippine / China



4. WWI Memorial



5. Dilboy Monument

Phase 1 Central Hill – Memorial Walk
East



7. Vietnam War Memorial



Central Hill Campus - Gold Star Plaza and Memorial Walk

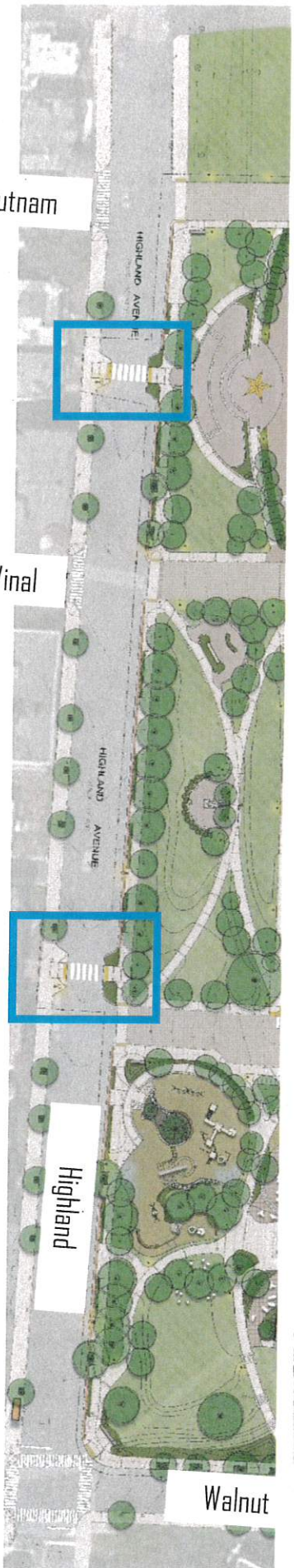
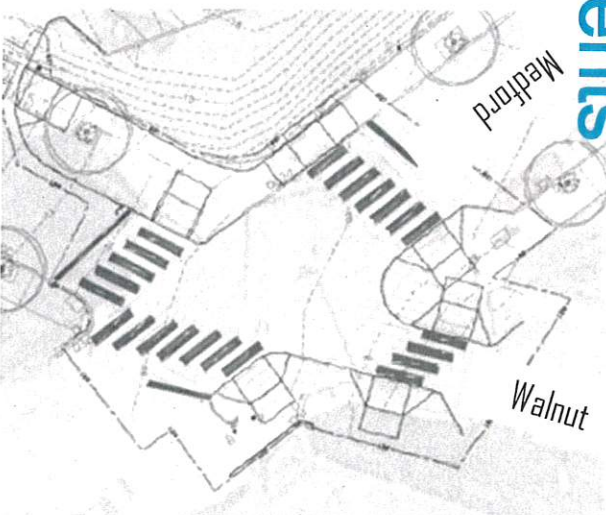


1. Korean War Memorial



2. Vietnam War Memorial

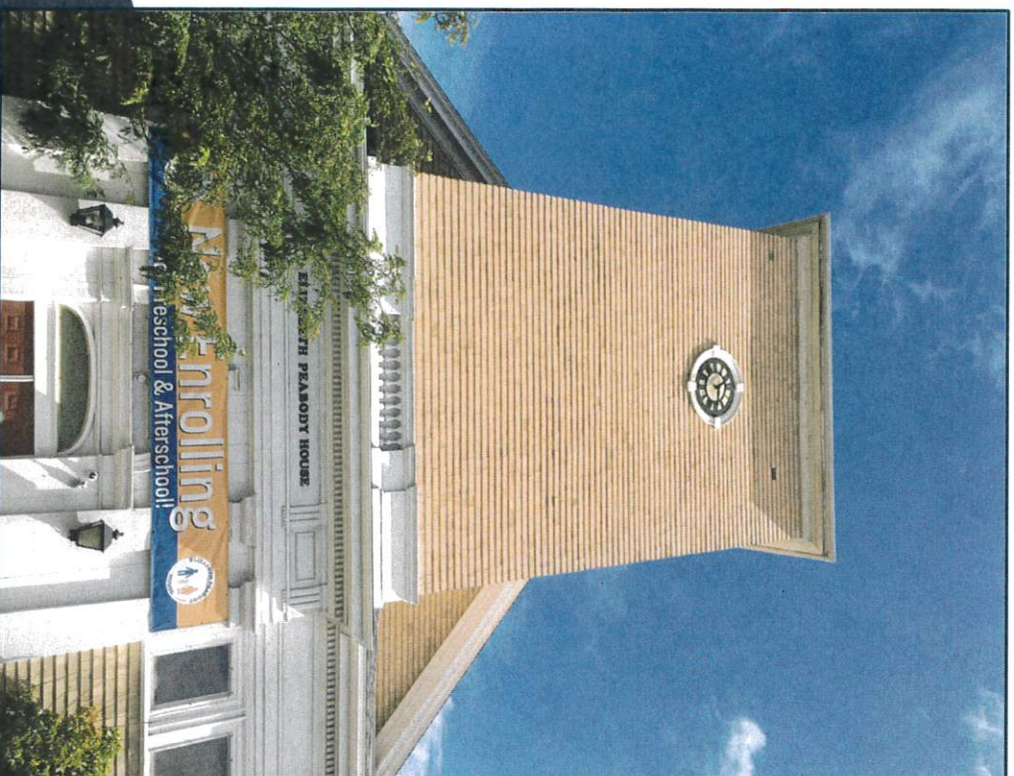
Central Hill Campus - Streetscape Elements



Elizabeth Peabody House

Addressable Fire Alarm System Project

The mission of Elizabeth Peabody House is to support families in our community in reaching their full potential through early childhood education, youth enrichment and development, and family services.



Kretcha Roldan, Executive Director
Katie Aucella, Development Associate

Programs:

Preschool

- 2 classrooms, 30 students
- Curriculum designed to foster physical, intellectual, social, and emotional growth
- Students and staff from a variety of backgrounds
- 2nd most affordable childcare out of 23 centers in Somerville.
- One of only 8 centers that accepts vouchers

Afterschool

- 43 students ages 5-14 years old
- Transportation from 6 Somerville schools (one of only 2 programs that offer transportation)
- Program offers:
 - homework assistance
 - social development
 - experiential learning to reinforce skills and knowledge

Programs, cont.:

Emergency Food Pantry

- Open every Wednesday from 5-7:30 pm
- Serve ~70 families each week, including EPH parents
- Distribute 2,700+ bags of groceries each month
- Collect and distribute 300+ Thanksgiving baskets to EPH families and community members

Camp Everwood

- Partnership with Everwood Day Camp in Sharon:
 - students experience a host of activities
 - opportunity to enjoy nature otherwise inaccessible due to economic hardship
- EPH offers transportation to and from camp
- Camp slots reserved annually for EPH students and Alumni

Who We Serve

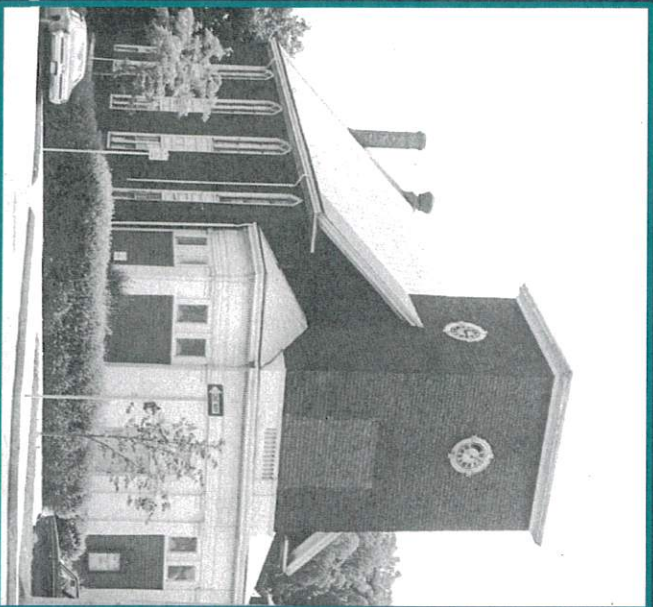
Immigrant Families

- 50% of students are first-generation American
- Families come from countries like Haiti, El Salvador, Eritrea, Brazil, etc.
- ~65% of Food Pantry clients speak English as a 2nd language

Low Income Families

- 65% of our students are on vouchers/contracts
- 81% of Afterschool students receive free/reduced lunch
- 1 in 3 of our students come from a single-parent household

Historical Significance



View of 277 Broadway from across the street, date unknown

- Built in 1882 as a Methodist Church
- Colonial Revival style church with entrance foyer and tower
- Acquired by EPH in 1979 and converted into a community building
- Historical designation in October 2017

Prior CPA-Funded Projects

FY 2018: Full Roof Replacement

- Stripped the old shingles
- Replaced rotten roof boards
- Re-shingled roof and installed new rubber on flat roof

before



after



FY 2019: Comprehensive Building Assessment

- Prioritized building rehabilitation plan
 - Next steps after roof replacement
- Outlined 3 immediate causes to address:
 - *Ground electrical cabling*
 - Completed within week of receiving assessment
 - *Fix remaining water filtration through roof*
 - Completed before end of the summer
 - *Demolish and replace egress staircase from afterschool*
 - Finished week of October 14th 2019
- Listed other areas of concern/priority

before



after



New Proposal & Community Benefits



FY20 Proposal: installation of an addressable fire alarm system.

- Allows firefighters to see exactly where an alarm is being set off
- Next on list of suggested renovations from building assessment plan
- Crucial to ensure working and up-to-date safety systems

Community Benefits:

- Reduce potential damage to the building
- Provides sustainability to
- Extends potential of our services to immigrants and low-income families

VNA Healing Garden



Visiting Nurse Assisted Living Community
259 Lowell Street
Somerville, MA 02144

VNA History



- History of the Somerville Visiting Nurses
- Founded in 1906 by women in Somerville
- Sent nurses and social workers into the tenements
- Provided essential care to young and old
- Always without regard to whether they could pay

Visiting Nurse Assisted Living Community

- œ Fast Forward to 1990's - VNA built the first and only AFFORDABLE assisted living home for extremely low income seniors. *Indeed over 90% of residents have incomes of less than \$10,000 per year.*
- œ Created a home for 97 seniors and disabled persons who would otherwise be homeless of confined to a nursing home.
- œ Limited or stagnant resources for capital improvements.

VNA Community Garden

- œ Built over 20 years ago, designed by a grateful grandson and funded entirely by donations
- œ Virtually a “hidden gem” acclaimed by the Somerville Garden Club/designated a Urban Refuge.
- œ Severely impacted by GLX decimation of trees/foilage
- œ Access pathways deteriorated and unsafe
- œ Need for a major transformation

VNA Healing Garden



- ❧ Vision is to transform the existing garden to a Community Healing Garden for all.
- ❧ Create and encourage access from Community Path.
- ❧ Fix pathway to make safe and accessible for all.
- ❧ Replace fencing and line walkway with trees, shrubs and pollinator and herbal plants
- ❧ Create peaceful sitting areas for quiet reflection, small groups, healing sessions, and memorials

*The Community Healing Garden at the
Visiting Nurse Assisted Living Community*

259 Lowell Street, Somerville, Massachusetts 02144

Driveway / access area - Improvements sketch

Date: September 10, 2019



Existing photo



*The Community Healing Garden at the
Visiting Nurse Assisted Living Community*

259 Lowell Street, Somerville, Massachusetts 02144

Garden area - Improvements sketch

Date: September 10, 2019



Existing photo



ZEN Associates, Inc.
the balance of art, science, and nature

Budget & Timetable



VNA COMMUNITY HEALING GARDEN

CPA BUDGET	TIMELINE	COMMENTS
Fencing	\$21,850 April	CPA Funds
Sitework	April	CPA Funds
Irrigation	May	CPA Funds
Plantings	June	CPA Funds
Lighting	\$74,400 June	CPA Funds
Asphalt	\$47,635 July	CPA Funds
Furniture	\$28,614 August	CPA Funds
Signage	\$328 September	VNA Funds
Security	\$52,830 September	VNA Funds
TOTAL	<u>\$225,657</u>	GRAND OPENING!

Join us and Elevate

Join the Somerville Museum's Call to Action to bring the Museum into the 21st century through access for all physically, spiritually and with the purpose to enhance lifelong learning and enjoyment.



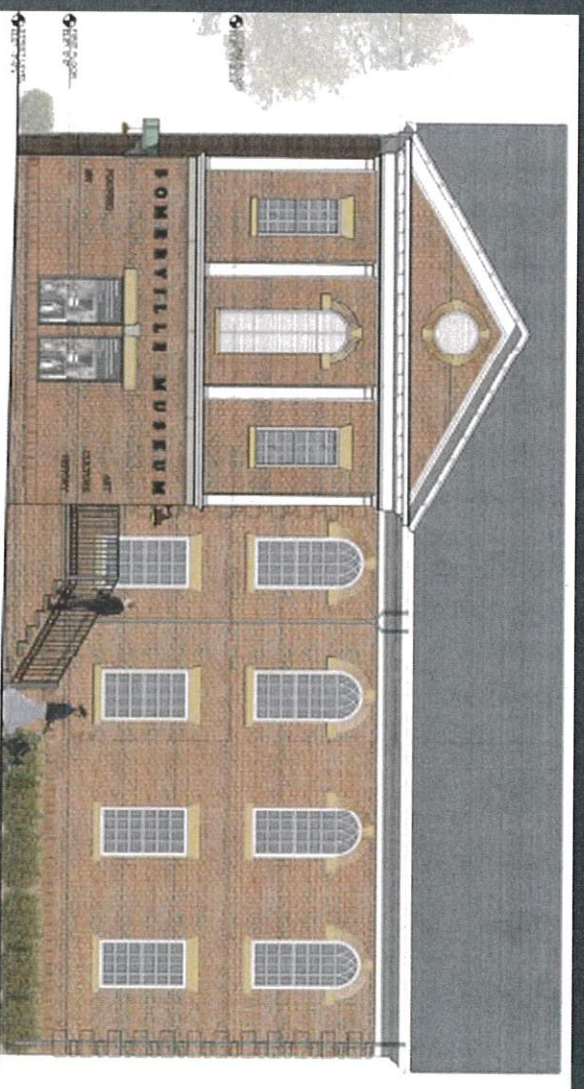


2019

View of the Museum building from across Westwood Road

Left: status as of summer 2019

Right: Architect's rendition of the proposed elevator addition with pedestrian stairs to the right.



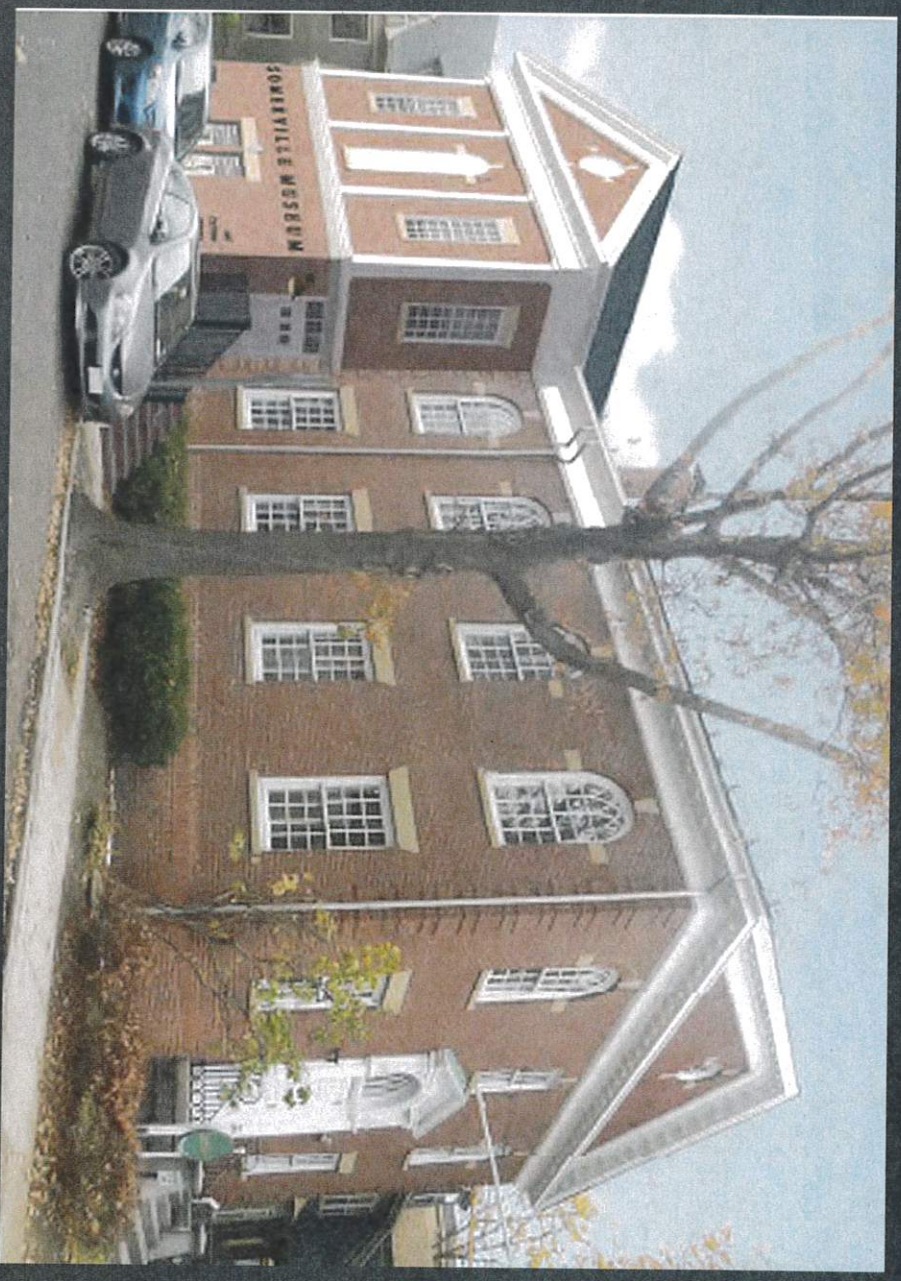
1 PROPOSED WESTWOOD RD ELEVATION
SCALE: 3/32" = 1'-0"



View of the Museum building from the West –

Left: actual status as of summer 2019

Right: Architect's rendition of the proposed elevator addition
Wheelchair entrance on left.



View of the Museum building from Central St.

Left: status as of summer 2019

Right: Architect's rendition of the proposed elevator addition with pedestrian stairs to the right.

Rear view of the Museum building

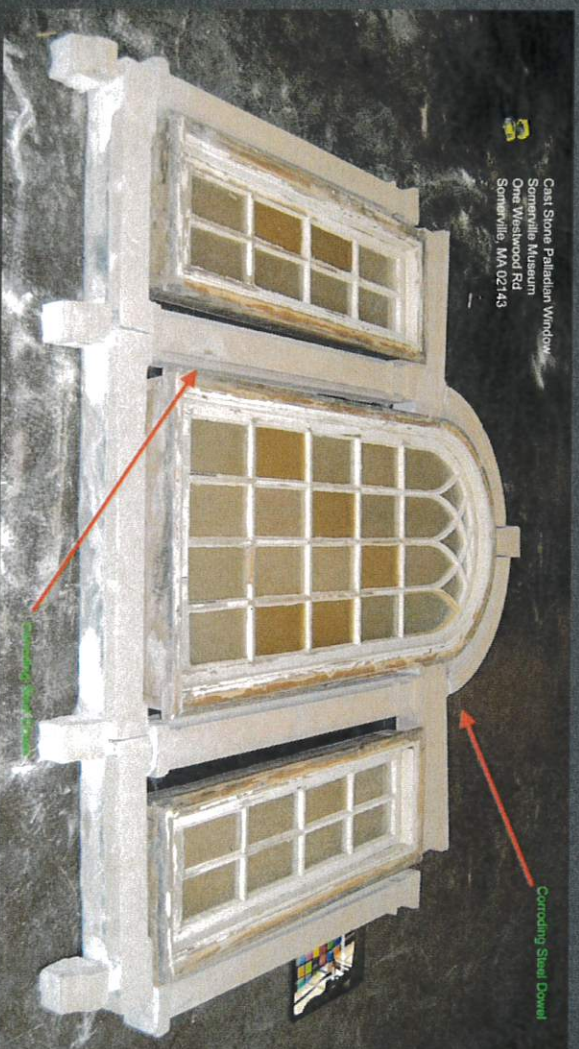


2019



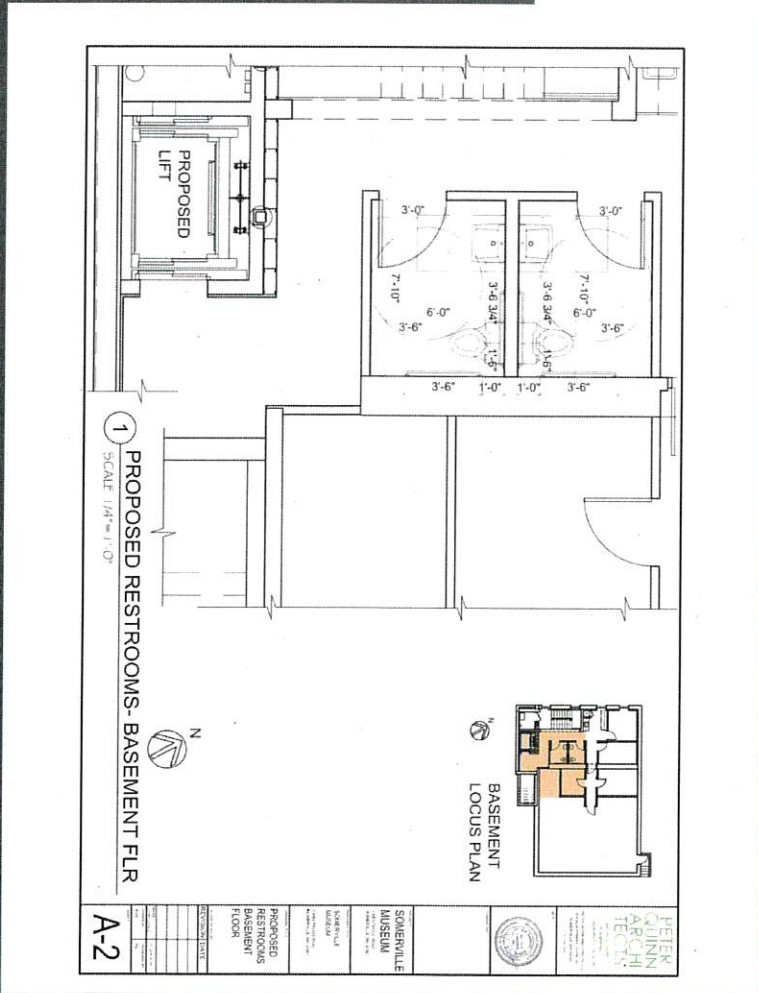
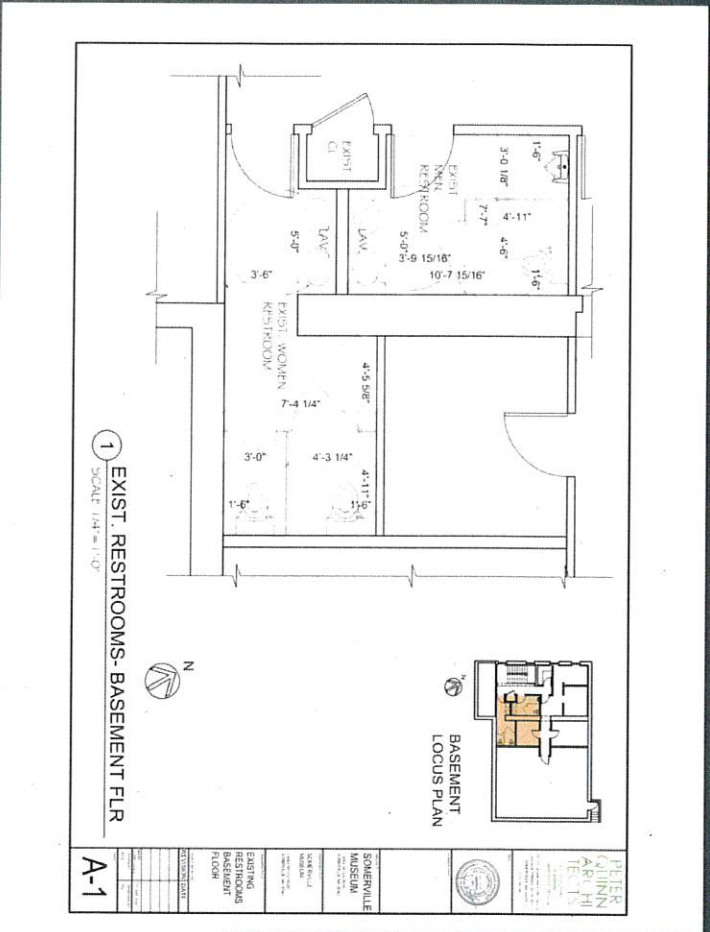
③ PROPOSED REAR ELEVATION
SCALE: 3/32" = 1'-0"

Not to forget
the historic
Palladian
Window...



Palladian window
to be reinstalled on
the rear façade
after conservation
Status as of
February 2019
(Thanks to Gentle Giant
for their help in moving
and displaying the window
for review.)

Existing vs Proposed Restrooms



[illegible]

EXISTING WALLS AND OTHER

COMPANION TO THE DEPARTMENTAL

EXISTING VALUES AND OTHER